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THE HOUSE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

STATEMENT OF  
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DIRECTOR, JOINT CENTER FOR OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS  
U.S. JOINT FORCES COMMAND

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS  
ON  
6 APRIL 2006

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The Iraqi Perspective Project is a research effort conducted by U.S. Joint Forces Command's Joint Center for Operational Analysis. It focuses on Operation Iraqi Freedom, and specifically, the time period from March to May 2003. Using information gathered through dozens of interviews with senior Iraqi military and political leaders during the fall and winter of 2003-2004, and making use of thousands of official Iraqi documents, we have a comprehensive historical analysis of the forces and motivations that drove our opponent's decisions.

To accomplish this, project leader Kevin Woods led a small team of professionals in a systematic two-year study of the former Iraqi regime and military. This book is the first major product of that effort. Essentially, Kevin and his team crafted a substantive examination of Saddam Hussein's leadership and its effect on the Iraqi military decision-making process. Moreover, it goes a long way towards revealing the inner workings of a closed regime from the insiders' point of view.

The overall objective of this project was to learn the right lessons from Operation Iraqi Freedom. While the practice of self-critique and gathering lessons learned are distinguishing features of the U.S. military, in almost every past instance our understanding of events remained incomplete because any assessment was limited to a "blue" only view of the situation. While we often had a relatively complete picture of what our adversary did, we remained in the dark as to what motivated his actions. At the conclusion of past conflicts, we were left to speculate which of our actions were causing specific enemy responses and why. Expert analysts and "red team" assessments attempt to make this speculation as informed as possible, but because of the impenetrability of closed regimes, even their usefulness is somewhat limited.

In this case, however, by shedding light on the actual “red team’s view,” this study hopes to contribute to a more fully developed history of the war.

It should be noted that this is the first such effort by the U.S. Government since World War II, when the U.S. conducted a comprehensive review of recovered German and Japanese documents, as well as interviews of key military and civilian leadership of our former enemies.

Though this project is an important first step, we acknowledge that our understanding of OIF is far from complete.

This report is a declassified version of a product that has been applied to Joint Professional Military Education, joint training and concept development venues for the last two years. It is in the interest of getting as much accurate information as possible into the hands of those already studying OIF that we released this report to the general public.